

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 AID-05 SSC-01 PC-01 DEAE-00 SNM-05 EB-08
COME-00 TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 /098 W
-----013815 032230Z /61

R 032058Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0811
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 5865
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GUATEMALA 3878

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINR, GT
SUBJ: LUCAS' CABINET

SUMMARY. LUCAS' CABINET APPOINTMENTS ARE FOR THE MOST PART
UNDISTINGUISHED, ALTHOUGH NOT AS PATRONAGE-ORIENTED AS SOME
HAD FEARED. LUCAS PASSED UP AN OPPORTUNITY TO SCORE HUMAN
RIGHTS POINTS BY RETAINING IN HIS CABINET LAUGERUD'S MINISTERS
OF DEFENSE (ONE ASSUMES HE HAD NO CHOICE) AND GOVERNMENT, THE
LATTER PRESUMABLY OVER THE COUNSEL OF VICE PRESIDENT VILLAGRAN
KRAMER. OF KEY POSTS, THE FOREIGN AND FINANCE MINISTRY
APPOINTEES APPEAR TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKER THAN PREDECESSORS;
LABOR MAY BE A BRIGHT SPOT. END SUMMARY.

1. LUCAS BROKE UNUSUAL SUSTAINED SILENCE ON COMPOSITION OF
HIS CABINET WITH JUNE 29 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESE NAMES:

FOREIGN RELATIONS -- ING. RAFAEL CASTILLO VALDEZ.
JUST STEPPED DOWN AS PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS; MEMBER OF HIGH
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COMMAND OF PID, ONE OF TWO MAIN PARTIES IN LUCAS COALITION.
FORMER ARMY OFFICER, MARRIED TO AMERICAN CITIZEN, MORMON.
PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS EXPERIENCE LIMITED TO TERM
AS AMBASSADOR TO UN (1970-74). VERY COOPERATIVE WITH US
DURING CONGRESSIONAL PRESIDENCY, BUT CONSIDERED A FIGURE OF
LESS INTELLECTUAL WEIGHT THAN MANY OF HIS PREDECESSORS.

DEFENSE -- GENERAL OTTO SPIEGELER NORIEGA.
HOLDOVER FROM LAUGERUD ADMINISTRATION, AS EXPECTED, BUT SOME
INDICATION HE MAY RETIRE SOONER RATHER THAN LATER BECAUSE OF
POOR HEALTH. LEFTISTS DEMANDED HIS HEAD AFTER PANZOS INCIDENT.
DEFENSE MINISTER'S OVERLAPPING TWO ADMINISTRATIONS IS TRADI-
TIONAL HERE.

GOVERNMENT -- LIC. DONALDO ALVAREZ RUIZ.
SECRETARY GENERAL OF PID AND, LIKE SPIEGELER, A HOLDOVER.
SYMBOLICALLY SIGNIFICANT APPOINTMENT IN THAT IT OCCURS
DESPITE PUBLIC ATTACK ON HIM BY NEW VICE PRESIDENT VILLAGRAN
KRAMER OVER THE EXPULSION OF A SPANISH NUN DURING THE PANZOS
AFTERMATH.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC WORKS -- ING. OTTO BLOCK.
LONG-TIME MINISTRY OFFICIAL, IN ROADS DEPARTMENT. MOST
RECENTLY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS. NO KNOWN
POLITICAL AFFILIATION.

EDUCATION -- COLONEL CLEMENTINO CASTILLO CORONADO.
HAD BEEN ARMY'S PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR. EDUCATIONAL
EXPERIENCE LIMITED TO DIRECTORSHIP FOR SOME YEARS OF ARMY-
RUN MILITARY SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

AGRICULTURE -- ING. EDGAR PONCIANO CASTILLO.
WEALTHY YOUNG (40) COTTON GROWER ACTIVE IN LUCAS CAMPAIGN.
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HAS BEEN PRESIDENT OF VARIOUS PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS
INCLUDING CACIF, CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL COTTON
COUNCIL. SON OF UNSUCCESSFUL MLN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE (1966).
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE UNDER ARANA (1970-71), BUT HAS NO
PARTY AFFILIATION.

PUBLIC HEALTH -- DR. ROQUELINO RECINOS MENDEZ.
JUST FINISHED TERM AS PR CONGRESSMAN FROM PETEN, WHERE
FORMERLY HE WAS DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL. MORE
POLITICIAN THAN TECHNICIAN.

LABOR AND SOCIAL SECURITY -- LIC. CARLOS ALARCON MONSANTO.
MEMBER OF PR AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE (1969-70) IN MENDEZ
MONTENEGRO ADMINISTRATION. UNSUCCESSFUL GUATEMALA CITY
MAYORAL CANDIDATE IN 1974 WHEN SUPPORTED BY GROUPS OF
LEFTIST TENDENCY. EXPERIENCED LABOR LAWYER.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GUATEMALA 3878

FINANCE -- COLONEL HUGO TULIO BUCARO.
HAD BEEN CHIEF OF ARMY FINANCE. BACKGROUND IS PRIMARILY
ACCOUNTING. BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS ALREADY MAKING INVIDIOUS
COMPARISONS BETWEEN BUCARO AND LAMPORT RODIL, WHO HAD A
PERSONAL ROLE IN GUATEMALA'S STRONG INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL
REPUTATION UNDER TWO ADMINISTRATIONS. TIES WITH LUCAS DATE
FROM ARMY CADET DAYS WHEN LUCAS WAS ASSIGNED TO BE
BUCARO'S "BIG BROTHER."

ECONOMY -- LIC. VALENTIN SOLORZANO FERNANDEZ.
ECONOMIST, MOST RECENTLY PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR FOR CENTRAL
AMERICAN COMMON MARKET SECRETARIAT (SIECA); DEPUTY MINISTER
OF ECONOMY (FOR CACM AFFAIRS) IN 1967-68 UNDER MENDEZ MON-
TENEGRO. NO KNOWN PARTY AFFILIATION. INITIAL VIBRATIONS IN
THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WITH REGARD TO HIS COMPETENCE AND
HONESTY ARE NOT GOOD.

3. OTHER SIGNIFICANT APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED AT SAME TIME ARE
THOSE OF JORGE GARCIA GRANADOS (PR SECRETARY GENERAL) TO BE
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SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY; LUCAS PRESS CHIEF CARLOS
TOLEDO VIELMAN, PRESIDENTIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS SECRETARY;
LIC. RUTH CHICAS DE SOSA (PR), PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY FOR
SOCIAL WELFARE (A FUNCTION NORMALLY TAKEN BY PRESIDENT'S WIFE
-- LUCAS IS UNMARRIED). AN UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT FOR US IS

THE RELACEMENT AS DEPUTY MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT OF CARLOS SANDOVAL VASQUEZ, WHO HAD PROVED VERY HELPFUL IN NARCOTICS MATTERS.

3. COMMENT. AT FIRST BLUSH, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF DEFENSE AND GOVERNMENT, THIS IS NEITHER A PARTICULARLY STRONG CABINET NOR, AS SOME HAD FEARED, ONE DOMINATED BY POLITICAL PAYOFFS. RATHER, IT IS AN OVERLAPPING COMBINATION OF INCONSPICUOUS TECHNICIANS (ECONOMY, PUBLIC WORKS), PERSONAL FRIENDS (AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, FINANCE) AND POLITICIANS (FOREIGN RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT, LABOR AND HEALTH). ON PAPER IT IS SIGNIFICANTLY WEAK IN TWO IMPORTANT AREAS: FOREIGN RELATIONS, WHERE CASTILLO VALDEZ WILL HAVE A HARD TIME FILLING MOLINA'S SHOES (ALTHOUGH HE BRINGS TO THE POST A DOMESTIC POLITICAL BASE WHICH MOLINA LACKED); AND FINANCE. THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY IS RELIEVED THAT JORGE GARCIA GRANADOS, RUMORED FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE BANK OF GUATEMALA, HAS GONE ELSEWHERE. THE APPOINTMENT OF ALARCON TO THE LABOR PORTFOLIO (A POLITICAL HOT POTATO WITH FEW PRETENDERS) HAS ENCOURAGED SOME IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT TO HOPE THEY MAY GET MORE OF HEARING THAN THEY DID FROM HIS BUSINESS-ORIENTED PREDECESSOR. FINALLY, IT IS TO LUCAS' CREDIT THAT HE CHOSE TO FILL THE POTENTIALLY VERY LUCRATIVE PUBLIC WORKS POST WITH A TECHNICIAN RATHER THAN A CRONY OR POLITICAL CREDITOR. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, THE CABINET ANNOUNCEMENT COMES AS A DISAPPOINTMENT TO THOSE WHO BELIEVED LUCAS' SITUATION REQUIRES PARTICULARLY STRONG, SKILLED AND HONEST LEADERSHIP IN THE MINISTRIES TO HELP SURMOUNT THE COUNTRY'S CURRENT SENSE OF DRIFT AND MALAISE.

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Message Attributes

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TAGS: PINT, PINR, PGOV, GT, (LUCAS GARCIA, FERNANDO)
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